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To: Planning and Sustainability Commission

Subject: comp plan testimony

With the 20-year plan, now seems like a good time for the Planning and Sustainability Commission to address some significant long-term problems in Portland related to gentrification, displacement, and why certain types of development happen at certain times and places and who profits from that development.

Portland has seen massive rent increases in a very short period of time: everyone I know can tell of numerous people with stable, long-term jobs who've seen their rent as much as double overnight, forcing them to move. One statistic I encountered showed rents in pre-1940 buildings increasing 47% since 2005, and apartment rents in general increasing 11% in just the last year! This at a time when many people's wages are stagnant or falling. It's long past time to institute some form of rent control in Portland and promote community land trusts and co-operatives so renting and home-ownership remain affordable. People who've been committed residents and business-owners in neighborhoods through all the years when no rich people or the city cared about them deserve to be involved in deciding what development happens now. At every stage of development we should be involved. The city needs to rethink the wholesale tearing down of both residential and commercial buildings so a rich developer who may not even live in Portland can replace them with cheaply-built yet unaffordable condos and apartments. Beautiful, old commercial and light industrial buildings that house businesses providing long-term, living wage jobs are being torn down and replaced with unaffordable apartments and condos. Where are these jobs going to go? Outlying areas that workers will have to drive to? Well-built old houses are being demolished and replaced with expensive new construction. Bookstores, music venues, yarn shops, Ethiopian restaurants--you name it: Portland's diverse character is rapidly disappearing.

The wholesale changes that have happened in inner north Portland are particularly disturbing due to how quickly they have come after decades of racial transition, housing segregation, discrimination, redlining, property speculation and government neglect. People who were prevented from buying the houses they occupied as long-term tenants due to a host of factors, including racist lending policies by banks, have been forced out of their communities as their landlords--who live elsewhere--realize how much they can make selling off their properties. Housing is for people living in communities with one another, not for landlords, developers, and the city to profit off of at everyone else's expense. The City of Portland needs to decide whether they want to promote these destructive changes or, instead, be instrumental in creating truly sustainable, viable, integrated, vibrant communities.

Seeing all of these massive construction projects on Vancouver, Williams, and Mississippi with architecture/construction company names on the fences--these are names you never saw in North Portland even 5 years ago. It seems like the city and developers just decided to expand the hideous Pearl District into North Portland. It's hard to see how any of this development will

benefit most folks in these neighborhoods: once rents go up they stay up; an increase in the number of rental units is unlikely to result in lower rents. I've seen buildings advertising themselves as "affordable" with rents for a one-bedroom apartment at \$1300/month! That is not affordable housing! Most of the new businesses here seem to be trendy bars and restaurants and upscale shops: few people I know patronize them. But they sure have attracted a ton of wealthy newcomers to the neighborhood--which seems to be the point.

It's high time the city took a look at how their policies promote certain types of development over others and whether those policies foster or ameliorate inequality and displacement. Portland's well on its way to turning into San Francisco. Let's not let that happen.

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